

BEST PRACTICES OF MYSORE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY: AN OVERVIEW

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1. Introduction:

Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary describes 'best practices as quality of high standard, excellence, highly improved, outstanding, par excellence service. It means way of doing something that is usual or expected way in a particular organization or situation, guidelines for good practices. In this process of developing best practices it takes action rather than good ideas, and it improve the skills.'

National Accreditation and Assessment Council (NAAC) and University Grants Commission has created a higher education body (the assigned job is to assess the quality of university and college institutions) in 1994 in Bangalore on the recommendation of National Policy of Education (NPE) in 1986 where in strives for quality and excellence in higher education and advocates for enhancing the role of library and Information Services in improving academic environment and this is known as National Accreditation and Assessment Council (NAAC).

NAAC prepared a document for "Best Practices in Academic Libraries says : "Best practice may be innovative and be a philosophy, policy, strategy, program, process or practice that solves a problem or create new opportunities and positively impact on organizations. "NAAC developed a set of best practices followed in academic libraries and presented under the following four broad areas:

1. Management and Administration of Library.
2. Collection and Services.
3. Extent of User Services.
4. Use of Technology.

A database of documented practices is available on NAAC website and they assure that regular updating will be made with consultations on contributing institutions. For college libraries NAAC has developed the following set of best practices for college libraries:

- Computerization of library with standard software.
- Inclusion of sufficient information about the library in the college prospectus.
- Compiling student / teacher statistics
- Displaying newspaper clippings and a clipping file maintained periodically.
- Career/ employment information services

- Internet facility to different user groups
- Information literacy programmes
- Suggestion Box
- Displaying New Arrivals
- Conduct book exhibition on different occasions
- Organizing book talks
- Instituting Annual Best Use Award for students
- Organizing competitions annually
- Conduct user survey periodically

However the above set of best practices for college libraries prepared by NAAC cannot be termed as the last word. The following set of practices too should have been included in it.

- Making of a Path Finder to the library
- Keeping the library premises neat and clean
- Compiling a list of Current Serials/ catalogue of journals.
- Updating and maintaining library website
- Maintaining useful statistics regarding the use of the library and displaying them on the library walls
- Compiling checklists on different subject/topics as a part of documentation service
- Library Committee formation
- Distribution of useful handouts

2. Impact of ICT on library services:

The global changes particularly in Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) have impact on the functioning of academic libraries. The developments in ICT have changed the users' expectation from the academic libraries in different ways. More than two decades ago there has been transforms from traditional access of information resources to online access to library catalogues, databases etc. in this context it indispensable for library to put up with the online services for users and provide access to - Online/Offline access to digital resources, Database searching, Electronic reference and library should have the facility online circulation service Information literacy program. There should be public relations services and conduct library promotion and marketing and also E-publishing.

3. Challenges in the changing environment:

- Focus on accountability –increasing demand for libraries to demonstrate outcomes/ impacts in areas of importance to institution.
- Emphasis on assessment of student performance/research out puts.
- Financial pressures – increasing pressure to maximize use of resources.
- Expectation for rapid document delivery.
- User education in new technologies.
- Migration to online full-text sources.
- Greater need for staff training.

4. Need for Best Practices:

"Libraries are in the service business so it has to ensure quality in service. The most important product they have is service. Without service, libraries are indistinguishable from museums or they are a combination of a maze and morgue for books. Service is a pervasive ethic of the profession of librarianship."(Gorman, 1999)

5. Original Ten Dimensions for Evaluating Library Service Quality:

There are ten general determinants of service quality that can be applied to most types of service. These are general criteria that can be used to assess the quality of service customers expect and receive. These determinants can be used to formulate Best Practices.

6. Dimensions of Service Quality:

- Access.
- Communication.
- Competence.
- Courtesy.
- Credibility.
- Reliability.
- Responsiveness.
- Security.
- Tangibles.
- Understanding/Knowing the Customer.

7. Determinants of Service Quality:

- Access - the ease and convenience of accessing the service(s).
- Communication - keeping your users informed; listening to your users.
- Competence - having the skills and knowledge to provide the service(s).
- Courtesy - politeness, respect, consideration, and friendliness of staff at all levels.
- Credibility - trustworthiness, reputation and image.
- Reliability - providing consistent, accurate and dependable service(s); delivering the service as promised.
- Responsiveness - being willing and ready to provide service(s) when needed.
- Security - physical safety; financial security; confidentiality.
- Understanding the customer – knowing individual customer needs.
- Tangibles - the physical aspects of the service such as equipment, facilities, resources.

8. Best Practices for Academic Libraries:

Book Display Program

Organizing exhibitions and book display programme on important dates, and important occasion on eminent personalities. This helps and provides an opportunity for users to know the various types of information resources available on a particular aspect in the library and information Centre.

MUL organize book exhibitions on birth anniversaries of eminent personalities like freedom fighters, Jnanapita awardees, Women's day, Swami Vivekananda, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, Teachers Day, Kannada Rajyotsava, and National Book Week Dr. S.R.Ranganathan and so on.

MUL has the tradition of conducting extension programme. Eg . Meet the author, Book talk. Special lecture.

Orientation programme

One of the Best practices is to create awareness among the students about the library resources, the library services, good reading habits, creative programmes and activities for maximum utilization of the library. In other words enlightening the fresh students at the beginning of each academic year about the importance of the library, thereby exposing the students to the various sections of the library, the library resources and the various library services.

MUL conducts orientation programme for the fresh students at the beginning of each academic year about importance of library resources, facilities and services provided. The staff also takes the users for library tour for introducing the services and also heads of each section.

Staff Users Meet

The academic libraries should organize various programmes including orientation, lectures on related issues, and topics, workshops, seminars, which focuses the issues useful to the users as well as to the staff. The libraries may organize programmes in information handling in the present digital era, knowledge networking, role of librarians in the electronic era, subject searching, time management, public relations, knowledge based systems, this helps to keep abreast the staff and the users about the latest developments and trends in library principles and practices, thereby bridging the gap between the staff and the users.

MUL library is organizing a number of workshops and seminars on accessing e-resources as well as conventional resources of the library where in directly or indirectly there is a platform to focus the issues useful to the users as well as to the staff.

Developing Virtual Presence

The libraries can use web 2.0 applications like social networking, blogging, use of RSS feed, audio and video streaming, wiki pedia, etc, and interacting delivery information services.

MUL has developed Web OPAC, Off campus access, Campus access – Ezproxy access- this software helps for remote accessing of e-resources from anywhere in the world of Mysore University Library.

Institutional repositories – e-prints software, approximately 8893 articles including conference/proceedings, book chapters, patents.

Theses – 4660 theses bibliographic details in KOHA.

E-books-CRC, Taylor & Francis, Springer, John Wiley.
E-journals-Licensed UoM e-journals.-Infonet

Demonstrations and Exhibitions

The Libraries should organize demonstrations and exhibitions to create awareness about their collection, services. This can be done inside the library separately through displaying the special collection and literary works of specific authors or group of authors thereby creating awareness about the particular author or literary works among its users, thus attracting even the people from different sections of the society like parents, management members, relatives of the staff members and the public.

The MUL has the tradition of insisting the publishers/book sellers to organize book exhibition of new arrivals for the benefit of students, researchers and faculty to recommend the preferred books and also for effective collection development of resources.

Information Brochures

Information brochures and pamphlets are also one of the important sources for creating awareness about the facilities, services, and the collections of the library, the users can be provided the information brochures at the time of their enrollments as registered members. The Information brochures may be on reprography or Xerox facilities, latest publications, and latest additions to the library. CD/DVD list, Book bank facilities, Library rules and regulations, electronic resources, and online information services list.

Web Based Services

The libraries can provide various web based services through its strong Library Website updated with services such as virtual tour, virtual reference desk, ask the librarian, full text article, help desk, lecture notes, electronic announcement, e-Books, digital suggestion box, project reports, frequently asked questions, dissertations, face book etc.

MUL extending the Online Public Access catalogue facility to the users of the library in order to provide necessary information about availability and location of the documents of the library. Institutional repositories—using e-prints software, 8637 articles, book sections-8, conference & workshops-307, book-29, patent-2, others-8 and it is in progress. There are around 4650 Theses bibliographic details in KOHA. 15197 eBooks bibliographic details are available on Web OPAC from different publishers -CRC, Taylor & Francis, Springer, John Wiley. E-journals-Licensed UoM e-journals.-Infonet can be accessible.

9. Best Practices of Mysore University Library:

- a. Mysore University is issuing a smart card like ID membership card wherein the card contains blood group of individual in addition to academic details which is of a product of Mysore University for social service.
- b. Mysore university library is first among universities in India to be compactable for Z39.58 MARC format which is helpful for copy catalog.
- c. The Mysore University Library is providing wifi connection for the users to access e-resources sitting on lawn, cafeteria etc.

- d. The Mysore University Library Web OPAC accessible on mobile phones to the users. (<http://mopac.mysore-univ.org>)
- e. MUL has developed Web OPAC, off campus access, Campus access – Ezproxy access- this software helps for remote accessing of e-resources of Mysore University Library from any corner of the world.
- f. The Mysore University Library is providing e-books facility (15197) and is navigating for further purchase. With a single search for e-books (we can retrieve e-books on a particular aspect across the publishers in a single search on Web OPAC).
- g. The Mysore University Library is providing services with well equipped assistive technologies for visually and physically challenged persons (Learning Resources centre for visually and physically challenged).
- h. The Mysore University Library is encouraging youngsters to compete in competitive exams like IAS, KAS, Staff selection, GAT etc by providing competitive exam books housed in CIRC.
- i. There are 120 workstations in the down floor as DIRC1 and in addition to these upcoming workstations with 300 computers as DIRC2 for users to access e-resources with reading hall facility.
- j. The Mysore University Library is following a tradition of bifurcating of old edition and new edition books and housing in controlled and active stack area respectively for retrieval of new and old books by the users.
- k. As on today the great 0189533 user login for OPAC response is unique among universities in India.
- l. MUL IR is indexed by Base search engine. Institutional repository of theses and MUL web OPAC of theses has hyper link for Vidyanidhi for accessing full text. Institutional repository possesses full text of rare monograph.

Books on authorship by S. Radhakrishnan

1. The Region of Religion in Contemporary Philosophy. 1920.
 2. The Philosophy of Rabindranath Tagore. 1916
- a. Mysore University Library provide special service for socially disadvantaged category like SC ST by housing the collections in TBLS and loan five books per head per year in addition to regular loan facility.
 - b. According IR spy the server login of Mysore University OPAC is 100% reliable.
 - c. Mysore University Library conducting user education programme on access of e-resources visiting to each department to develop user awareness.

10. Future plan of MUL:

- DIRC-2 with 300 workstations and reading hall 24*7
- To assess the use pattern of MUL web OPAC (like time of access, discipline, designation, duration etc). The authority is planning to assign an individual user ID login and password.
- As on today, e-books are of from 2006-2011, the authority is planning to negotiate further collection.
- MUL is setting up to Digital Library of holdings of ORI, Mysore.
- The Mysore University Library is providing e-books facility (15197) and is planning for further purchase.
- Mysore University Library is planning to create bibliographic details for Publications of

- Mysore University Journals like
- Prabhuthva Karnataka
- Vignana Karnataka
- My Science
- Manavika Karnataka
- My Society

11. Conclusion;

The concept of Survival of the fittest of Charles Darwin's ideas of evolution through natural selection, is very much applicable here, immediately if library professional does not come up with technology and update their knowledge and skill to render library service, collection of resources. As the Computer and Management researchers and scientist are occupying the area of Information science, Technology, and Management it is a high time for library professionals to be alert and update the ICT skills and implement Best practice to survive.

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